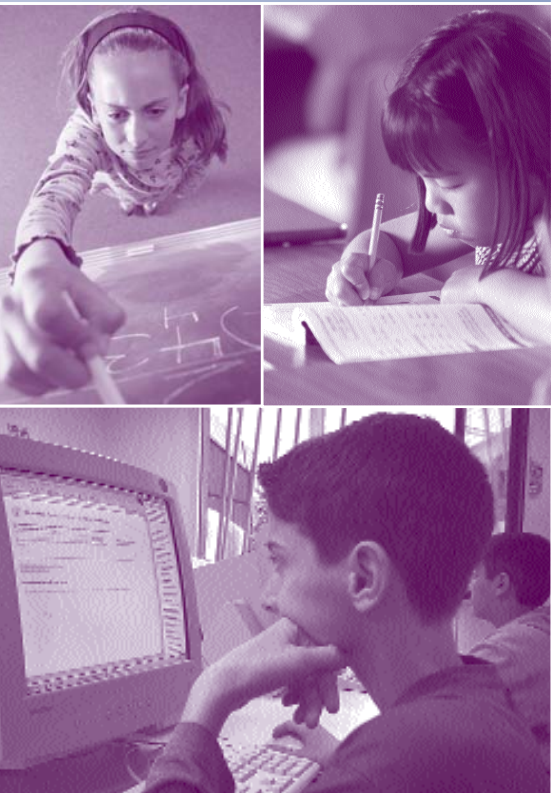


State Representative
Dennie Oxley
House Democratic Whip



Session Report



- ☒ The New State Budget
- ☒ Economic Development Initiatives
- ☒ Legislation Impacting Meth
- ☒ Changes in Education Requirements

INDIANA'S NEW BUDGET



School Funding Cuts and Increased Property Taxes

The new state budget that passed by a narrow margin increases property taxes and, at the same time, cuts funding for local schools. After years of bipartisan efforts to reform education and reduce property taxes, the majority party has approved a budget that will cut state funding for many schools and raise property taxes by nearly \$850 million.

I voted "NO" on the final version of the state budget because of the negative impact it will have on education, children and those who pay property taxes. I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget.

There are no minimum guarantees in state funding for schools, which means more than 140 school corporations will receive less money. Those corporations will be forced into eliminating teachers, cutting programs and increasing class sizes. Any additional funding for schools will come primarily from raising local property taxes.

There will be reduced state support through the Property Tax Replacement Credit (PTRC), another move that will increase local property taxes. This eliminates the promise

of just three years ago to provide more state support to combat rising property taxes in light of the historic and controversial statewide reassessment.

In addition, funding for the program that provides health care for the elderly, disabled and children will increase by 5 percent, although bipartisan experts have predicted a 10-percent growth. State assistance for road repairs and improvements will decrease as well.

It is a shame that the legacy of this session will be a budget that turns its back on Indiana's schoolchildren and property taxpayers. For anyone who cares about education and local taxpayers, it is simply indefensible.

"I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget."



Education Issues Update

A number of important education bills were approved this session outside of the state budget. As I discussed above, the new budget will shortchange many schools and force them to eliminate programs and lay off teachers, factors that will hurt our children's ability to get a quality education.

Here are other major education measures passed in 2005:

Starting in the 2010-11 school year, **students will have to complete the Core 40 curriculum in order to graduate.** Core 40 requires students to receive credits in a series of advanced courses, including English and language arts, math, science, social studies and foreign languages.

Other education bills will **change the enrollment date for kindergarten to August 1 from July 1**, require schools to adopt rules to prohibit bullying, and require the state Board of Education to set up cheerleading safety standards and guidelines.

Several proposals were defeated, including plans to move the ISTEP-plus test to the spring and revive the school voucher program.

Economic Development

I believe it is the duty of the General Assembly to provide the opportunities for Indiana to **create, maintain and increase good-paying jobs** in growth areas of our economy. This year's legislature made economic development a priority.

In fact, the very first bill passed into law this session created a new public-private group—the Indiana Economic Development Corporation—to serve as the leader for development efforts across our state. I was especially pleased we were able to make changes to this corporation that will ensure it is accountable to the public.

Other measures designed to help spur economic growth include **increasing the research and development tax credit**, phasing out the sales tax on research and development equipment, and extending the life and use of EDGE tax credits that help businesses retain and create jobs.

We also passed a measure that will speed the process of obtaining permits so developers can begin construction on new industrial sites. **Small business owners will receive additional tax breaks** under new legislation that will also reduce the potential that they will be harmed by government regulation.



New Laws Address Production of Meth

It has become a recurring theme each legislative session: the Indiana General Assembly passes new laws designed to stop the production and use of the drug meth. The 2005 session was no different, as we restricted the sale of cold and allergy medicines and other products that contain ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, two ingredients used to make meth.

When this law takes effect on July 1, most stores will be required to keep the drugs in a locked case or behind a counter. In addition, customers will be limited to three grams—about 100 tablets—of the medicines per week. To make a purchase, they will have to show a state or federal ID and sign a logbook.

This legislation is patterned after an Oklahoma law that has helped result in an 80-percent reduction in meth labs found in that state.

Meth is extremely dangerous because it can be made inexpensively using chemicals that are easy to purchase, produces a high that lasts longer than cocaine and causes delusions and psychotic behavior. Since many of the ingredients are highly dangerous, producing meth raises the risk of explosions and contamination.

“This legislation is patterned after a law that resulted in an 80% reduction in meth labs”

School Pledge

Legislation was passed this session

which will require a daily opportunity for students to voluntarily say the Pledge of Allegiance and observe a moment of silence in each public school classroom. The bill also states that each classroom must have a United States flag on display.



Photo IDs

Voters will be required to show photo identification before being allowed to cast a ballot. I fear this provision, which does not address the more serious concern of election fraud, will make it harder for senior citizens to take part in elections.

Protecting Firefighters



Volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians will not be penalized by their employers for being

absent when they are responding to emergency calls.

Alternate Fuels

Whenever possible, state government vehicles will be required to run on agriculture-based fuels, such as biodiesel, ethanol or gasohol.

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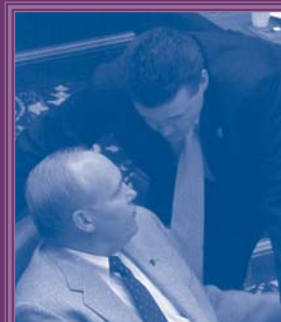
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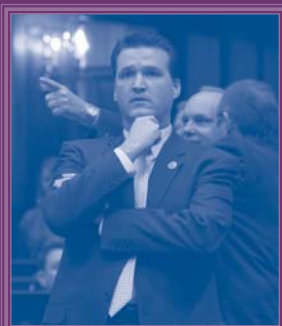
2005 Session Highlights



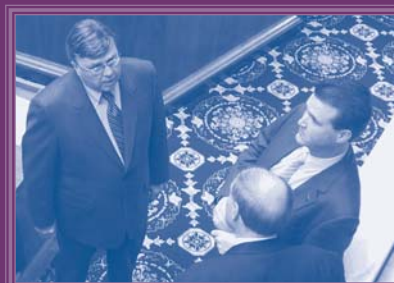
Rep. Oxley discusses legislation during a committee hearing.



Rep. Oxley works on legislation with Rep. Craig Fry (D-Mishawaka).



Rep. Oxley watches the tally in the House chamber as a bill is voted on.



Rep. Oxley talks with Democratic Leader Pat Bauer (D-South Bend) on the House floor.

Representative Dennie Oxley

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